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AUTHOR Thalden, Irene; Engelsman, Alan
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ABSTRACT

This booklet provides instruction, for junior high and senior high school actors and their teachers, in the basic concepts and vocabulary of theatrical communication. Suggested exercises include practice in combining dialogue and movement, mastering knowledge of stage areas and body positions, and working with scripts on stage. Criteria for evaluation of learning progress are delineated. (KS)

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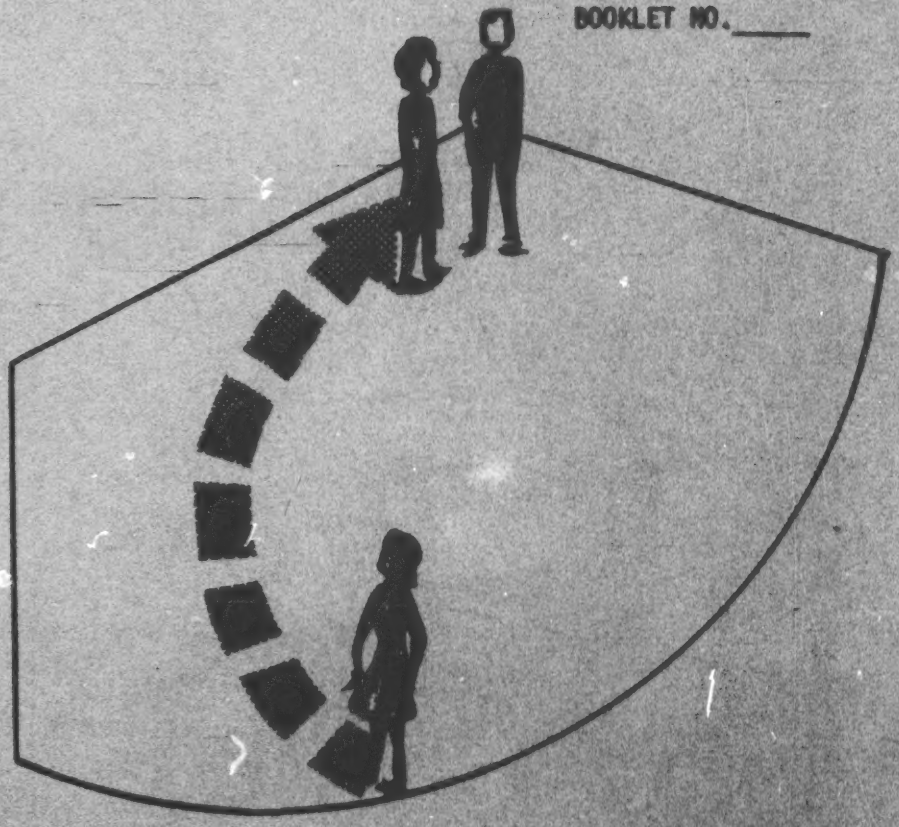
ACTING : STAGE MOVEMENT

TAP* 210

BOOKLET NO.____



For Theatre Arts Department:

CLAYTON HIGH SCHOOL
Clayton, Missouri 63105

HANLEY JR.HIGH SCHOOL
University City, Mo.63130

*Theatre Arts Package 6

Written by:
Irene Thalden
Alan Engelsman

September 1974

CS 201 HSH

TAP 210: STAGE MOVEMENT

INTRODUCTION:

Some people say acting talent is something you're born with; others contend that acting is mostly a matter of technique, of practice and experience. Both groups would probably agree that whether talent is inborn or carefully learned there are certain basic concepts that the young actor may build on. And there is also a vocabulary that allows him to communicate more clearly with other actors and directors. This package is an introduction to some of those concepts and terms.

PRE-EVALUATION:

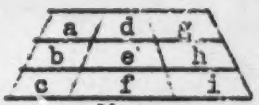
1. The purpose of a pre-evaluation is to help the learner discover how much he already knows and how much he needs to learn. If he can complete the pre-evaluation with ease, then perhaps he should try a different learning package. However, the learner should not be discouraged if he finds the pre-evaluation difficult; that merely indicates that the package probably contains information he can profit from.

2. The pre-evaluation for this package consists of a brief quiz. If you pass it with 77% correct or better, you probably don't need to do the package. Check with your teacher if you are unsure.

QUIZ

A. The three "W's" that an actor must consider before inventing movement for written dialogue are:
Who
W_____(1) and
W_____(2)

B. In the following diagram which sector represents:
DOWNSTAGE RIGHT?_____(3)
UP CENTER? _____(4)



C. List four different body positions for an actor on stage.
_____(5)
_____(6)
_____(7)
_____(8)

D. What is the strongest body position for an actor on stage?
_____(9)

E. Give a brief definition of a "shared scene."
_____
_____(10)

F. List three ways an actor on stage can gain dominance (in terms of blocking) over another actor in the scene.

_____

_____(11)

_____

_____12)

_____

_____(13)

3. Answers: Grade yourself. A score of 10 or more correct is 77%.

(1) Where (2) What (3) o (4) d (5) through (8): full front, full back, profile, one quarter, three quarters positions (9) full front (10) A scene in which both actors on stage have the same body position—usually profile—and are standing or sitting in the same stage area (11) through (13): dominant character, "D", is positioned upstage of the other character, "O"; "D" is standing "O" is sitting; "D"is positioned on a platform or level higher than "O"; "D" is in one of the stronger body positions—full front or one quarter while "O" is in a weaker body position; "D" is standing directly downstage of "O" and has a strong body position.

LESSON 1: COMBINING DIALOGUE AND MOVEMENT

PURPOSE:

Too often actors find that their bodies are frozen when they begin speaking dialogue. Dialogue should only be the skeleton around which the actor fills out the lines with movement.

PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVE:

Using a short dialogue, the actor will work with movement to give substance or reason to the written words. Through movement the actor will be able to use one script and suggest three or four different meanings for that dialogue.

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. This lesson is designed for two or three learners. If you belong to a larger group which has chosen this package, split up into independent sub-groups of two or three learners.

2. Activities 1 and 2 in this lesson are required.

3. Then you must complete at least one more activity and the self-evaluation. If you need help in assembling an audience for the self-evaluation, see your teacher.

4. When you have completed the self-evaluation, begin Lesson 2.

ACTIVITIES:

1. On the next page is a script titled "Shadow Scene A." A shadow scene has dialogue but no stage directions. The where, who, and what of the scene is left undefined.

   You and a partner will be acting out this scene three times. If there are three in your group, alternate turns as an observer. Since the lines are relatively simple, try to memorize them. This is a recommendation, not a requirement; you will move more freely without a script in your hands.

   A. The first time you enact the scene choose one of the following wheres and whos:

      Where: a school yard
      Who: "A" is a teacher or playground supervisor
      "B" is a student

      or

      Where: department store
      Who: "A" is a store detective
      "B" is a shoplifter

   The exact nature of the what is up to you to determine.

   It is important with shadow scenes to establish the where of the scene with pantomime. This is usually done even before the first line of dialogue is spoken. In Shadow Scene A, Character B is apparently doing

something on stage at the opening. Character A is either off stage or off to the side. Therefore Character B has the biggest responsibility for establishing where the scene takes place through pantomime.

If you can find a friend to perform this scene before, fine. If not, just enjoy your own performance. There will be other opportunities to act before an audience later in this package.

B. Next choose one of the following wheres and whos for the same shadow scene. Again you are free to decide what is happening.

Where: a street corner
Who: "A" is a drug pusher
"B" is a user

or

Where: a dancing school class
Who: "A" is an instructor intent on getting everyone involved
"B" is a wallflower

This time both Character A and Character B can help establish the where of the scene with an opening pantomime.

C. Finally, make up your own where, who, and what and perform the same scene one more time. Again establish the where through pantomime rather than by announcing to your audience where the scene is set.

In reviewing all three of your performances, you should be able to note how you moved differently in each scene. Movement on stage is probably determined more by the who, what, and where of a situation than it is by the actual words the actors speak. This is an important point to keep in mind as you work with other scenes in this package.

2. The next six line scene may seem to be pure nonsense, but again, by deciding on some possible who, what, and wheres, and by adding appropriate movement you should be able to make it seem at least plausible to a viewer or audience. Anyhow, that's what you're asked to do in the three subsections of this activity. But first, here is the scene:

____(1)____: The stars shine like torches in the night.

____(2)____: Leslie pulled the fire alarm and ran.

____(3)____: May I have some talcum powder, please.

____(4)____: Why doesn't anyone care about baby seals?

____(5)____: Sometimes I don't understand you.

____(6)____: I want you out of here by the time I count ten.

Notice that the name or identity of the speaker of each of the six lines above has been left blank. That is because who utters each line will vary from scene to scene. However, you are asked to keep the sequence of the lines the same throughout. To learn what you must do with this scene, read on.

SHADOW SCENE A

A: Hey, you,* come over here please.

B: Who? Me?

A: Yes. What are you doing? **

B: Well....

A: Well, what?

B: Well, I thought you could guess by just looking.

A: I mean, why?

B: Why not?

A: Do you know who I am?

B: Well, I think I can guess by just looking.

A: And you're right. Come along with me.

* You may substitute any one of the following for the word "you":
Sir; Miss; Ma'm; Young lady; Young man; son; buddy, babe, honey

** This sentence may be altered to: "What are you doing here?"

A. The above scene has been reprinted below with some fairly specific stage directions. Using the stage directions as a guide, perform the scene with a fellow actor. Each of you should memorize the three lines you have so you can move freely and pantomime action with your arms, legs, and body.

(The scene is a dormitory study on a college campus. Student A is seated at a typewriter. He [or she] inserts a blank piece of paper in the typewriter, sits and thinks for a moment, then types, then stops and reads what he [she] has typed.)

Student A: The stars shine like torches in the night. (He is dissatisfied, tears paper out of typewriter, crumples it, and inserts a clean sheet of paper. He thinks some more but doesn't write yet.)

(Student B enters the room whistling. He [she] is wearing a bathrobe and has a towel slung over his [her] shoulder; he has apparently just come from taking a shower and is now about to get dressed for an evening date. A loud bell rings off stage. Student B goes back out the door to see what the matter is. Student A remains seated at his typewriter, not writing. Student B returns.)

Student B: Leslie pulled the fire alarm and ran. (Student A gives Student B a disinterested look, then looks back to his typewriter, gets an idea and starts writing. Student B continues to prepare for his [her] date. To Student A:) May I have some talcum powder, please. (Student A glowers at his roommate but does, grudgingly, pass over the talc.)

Student A: (reading aloud the first sentence of what he has now written): Why doesn't anyone care about baby seals?

Student B: (Stops dressing for a moment and looks at his roommate): Sometimes I don't understand you.

Student A: (bangs hands down on typewriter, rises, and walks menacingly over to Student B): I want you out of here by the time I count ten (Student B backs over to the door, gives a feeble "bye-bye" wave with his hand and disappears).

B. After performing the above scene, create an entirely different one using the same six lines and the stage directions provided below. (If there are only two of you working on this package, you will have to recruit a third person for this scene.)

(The setting is the corner drug store. Two 10 year old children are huddled around the greeting card rack, reading the messages in the cards and giggling. The proprietor is nearby rearranging some merchandise on a shelf. He [she] has a constant problem with children loitering in the store and shoplifting.)

Child #1: (Choosing a card, giggling, and then reading it aloud in an over-dramatic voice to his [her] companion): The stars shine like torches in the night! (Both children giggle.)

Child #2: (finding a card that makes no sense to him [her] whatsoever, reads it like a question): Leslie pulled the fire alarm and ran? (Again, both look at the picture and caption on the card and giggle.)

(The proprietor, who is annoyed, walks over next to the two children, scowls and clears his throat. The children look up a little guiltily; they have been through this routine before.)

Child #1: (showing a dollar bill and asking sheepishly): May I have some talcum powder, please?

(The proprietor takes the dollar bill brusquely and disappears. The children go back to selecting strange or amusing cards)

Child #2: (reading): Why doesn't anyone care about baby seals? (They giggle.)

Child #1: (reading): Sometimes I don't understand you! (They giggle)

(The proprietor returns with talcum powder and change in hand, thrusts it at Child #1, and glowers at the two.)

Proprietor (pointing to the door): I want you out of here by the time I count ten!

C. Now it's your turn to come up with a situation and appropriate movement. The dialogue is reprinted once more below with plenty of spaces between the lines so you may write in clear stage directions. Choose an appropriate <u>where</u>, <u>who</u> and <u>what</u>, act out the scene one or two times, and then make a record of what you did by writing the stage directions below.

Some possible <u>wheres</u> and <u>whos</u> are: 1) An actress' (or actor's) dressing room. An assistant is helping her with her costume and going over cues from the play. 2) A classroom. The teacher is lecturing and writing on the board while some children are whispering and passing notes. 3) A cocktail party. 4) A mental hospital. 5) A family living room with the television set turned on.

(Setting and characters:

)

(1)_____: The stars shine like torches in the night.

(2)_____: Leslie pulled the fire alarm and ran.

(3)_____: May I have some talcum powder, please?

(4)_____: Why doesn't anyone care about baby seals?

(5)_____: Sometimes I don't understand you.

(6)_____: I want you out of here by the time I count ten.

All the exercises in the two above activities are designed to give you practice in inventing movement to accompany specific lines of dialogue. In an exaggerated way they stress the point that the way an actor moves while delivering lines of dialogue is at least as important to the meaning of those lines as the words themselves. The following activities are designed to reinforce that point this time leaving almost all of the decision making up to you. Complete at least one of them.

3. Working as spontaneously as possible with another actor, create at least six different interpretations for Shadow Scene B which is printed on the next page. For each interpretation you must decide:
   a. Who characters x and y are: their identity and relationship
   b. Where they are meeting
   c. What is happening

   For example, you might decide a) x and y are two old school chums ten years after graduation b) meeting at a class reunion party, and c) both are a little embarrassed that they haven't kept up their close friendship which is now totally dead.

   Act out your ideas so as to discover how you can establish who where and what through pantomime, stage movement, and vocal inflection. As a self-evaluation for this lesson, you will be asked to perform your four best scenes before a small audience of friends.

4. If several fellow students have fairly well "milked" Shadow Scene B for its many possible interpretations and you would like an entirely different script to work with, check out a copy of DRAMA: STUDENT HANDBOOK from the Drama Resource Area and try to devise six different interpretations for "Cooperation" on p. 38 or "The Return" on p. 41 or "Prized Possession" on p. 42. Then follow the directions written in the last paragraph of Activity 3.

5. Create a "nonsense" script similar to the one in Activity 2 in the following way:

   a. Ask six different people to write a one-line sentence of dialogue on a scrap of paper. Each person should have no knowledge of what the other five have written.

   b. Take the six scraps of paper and assemble them into as coherent a series of statements as possible. The chances are maybe one or two of the sentences will seem to make a little sense following some other one of the sentences. If you're lucky, maybe one of the sentences will seem to make a good final "punch" line.

   c. Copy the assembled scraps onto a single piece of paper. You now have a six-line script.

Next, act out <u>three</u> different interpretations of your script. For some possible situations you might refer back to Activity 2. This activity should give you more practice in establishing a <u>who</u>, a <u>where</u>, and a <u>what</u> through movement and pantomime. As a self-evaluation for this lesson, you will be asked to perform all three interpretations before a small audience of friends.

X: Hello.

Y: Hello

X: I didn't expect to see you here.

Y: I didn't expect to see you, either.

X: Well, it certainly is a surprise. You look a little pale.

Y: Is that so? I feel OK.

X: Well, good-bye.

Y: Good-bye.

ALTERNATIVE VERSION: The words of the following script are identical to the words in the above dialogue, but the characters uttering them vary slightly. You may use both versions in creating your six different interpretations.

X: Hello

Y: Hello

X: I didn't expect to see you here.

Y: I didn't expect to see you, either.

X: Well, it certainly is a surprise.

Y: You look a little pale.

X: Is that so? I feel OK. Well, good-bye.

Y: Good-bye.

SELF-EVALUATION:

1. Having completed Activity 1 and 2 and one or more of the remaining three activities, you should now assemble a small audience of classmates or friends. You may include your instructor in this audience if you wish, but it is not necessary.

2. If you completed Activity 3 or 4, perform the four versions of the single script you were working with. If you completed Activity 5, perform the three versions of your nonsense script. In all instances do not announce in advance the who where and what of your scenes. Rather, call on one member of your audience (who is seeing your performance for the first time) to identify the who, where, and what for the others. If someone in the audience can do that properly, you will know you have succeeded in meeting the performance objective of this lesson.

3. Ask the audience member whom you called on (in #2 above) to fill out and sign the following form:

   On _____(date) I observed _____(your name perform in a scene that apparently took place in (or at) a _____ (identify the suggested setting). The characters in the scene seemed to be

   _____

   _____ identify occupations or relationshi

   _____

   And they wanted (or one of them wanted) to _____.

   _____.

   Signed: _____

   Since each individual completing this package should have an opportunity to perform in at least two versions of this self-evaluation scene, you should obtain a similar "affadavit" for your performance of a second version.

   On _____(date) I observed _____(your name) perform in a scene that apparently took place in (or at a _____ (identify the suggested setting). The characters in the scene seemed to be

   _____

   _____ identify occupations or relationships

   _____

   And they wanted (or one of them wanted) to _____

   _____.

   Signed. _____

4. It is not necessary for you to check with your teacher before moving on to Lesson 2. However, you may be asked to repeat some of your self-evaluation performances for Lesson 1 in the final post-evaluation for the entire package.

LESSON 2: STAGE AREAS AND BODY POSITIONS

PURPOSE:

When working with other actors or a director, an actor should have a common understanding of certain basic terms and theories about dominance on stage.

PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVE:

The learner will be able to name and identify nine different stage areas and five body positions. He will be able to explain why one stage area is considered more or less dominant than another. And, given a picture of a scene from a play, he will be able to identify which characters are most dominant and why.

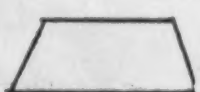
INSTRUCTIONS:

1. The information supplied in this lesson applies to the conventional proscenium stage more than to arena or thrust stages.
2. The first two activities of the lesson require three or more learners. If necessary, ask your instructor for aid in recruiting temporary co-workers in completing one of these exercises.
3. Do EITHER Activity 1 or Activity 2. You may, of course do both.
4. Do one (or more) of the next three activities (Activities 3, 4, or 5). Copies of the books mentioned are available in the Drama Resource Area.
5. Do one or more of the final four activities (Activities 6, 7, 8, or 9).
6. Take the Self-Test at the end of the lesson. If you fail to score 80% or better, do one of the Activities 3-10 that you didn't do before and take the test again. When you have scored greater than 80%, go on to Lesson 3.

ACTIVITIES:

1. Do the following exercise or one of the variations.

   A. Work on a proscenium stage or locate a rectangular area and designate one side where the "audience" would be sitting.



   B. Actor #1 and Actor #2 are "on stage" with their eyes closed. Actor #3 places them so that Actor #2 seems to have a more dominant position in relation to the "audience" than Actor #1. Actor #3 then sits in the audience to keep score and instructs the other two to open their eyes. There is no talking on stage in this exercise.

   C. Actor #1 may take up to five steps. His objective is to gain a position of dominance over Actor #2. At no time may the actors push or even touch one another.

   D. Actor #2 may then take four steps in an attempt to regain dominance.

E. Actor #1 then is allowed three steps, etc. Actor #3 comments after each turn whether the actor who has just moved has succeeded in achieving dominance and explains why he has judged the move successful or unsuccessful. Actor #1 has the final move: one step and the game is over.

F. Repeat the game interchanging roles as Actors #1, #2, and #3.

VARIATION:

After positioning the two "blind" actors on stage, Actor #3 takes what he considers to be a dominant position. A fourth participant becomes the audience and judge. Actor #3 gets to move after Actor #1 and after Actor #2. His object is to maintain dominance over the other two.

VARIATION:

Set up the stage as described above, but once the actors open their eyes, they may move freely trying to gain visual dominance over the other actor(s) on stage. Again, no talking or physical contact allowed. Movements are spontaneous; if an actor loses dominance, he should move to gain it back. The participant in the audience attempts to keep score and calls a halt to the game after two minutes.

2. Create an improvized scene involving three actors using the following guidelines:

A. Actor #1 is to portray a person who has a position of authority while Actors #2 and #3 are equal and seeking Actor #1's favor. Some possible WHO, WHERE, and WHAT's are suggested below; you may use others of your own invention.

	WHO	WHERE	WHAT
1)	#1 is a principal #2 is an art teacher #3 is an English teacher	principal's office	#2 and #3 share the same classroom; each wants the other evicted or wants the sole right to decide on the arrangement of chairs and tables in the room.
2)	#1 is a lawyer #2 and #3 are children of a recently deceased millionaire	living room, after the reading of the father's will which bequeathed "to my favorite child" the family estate and 3/4 of the inheritance	#2 and #3 are each trying to convince the lawyer of their individual qualifications as "favorite child."
3)	#1 is a high school basketball star; #2 and #3 are college recruiters	A College Night mixer at #1's high school	#2 and #3 are both trying to convince #1 that the individual schools they represent would provide #1 with better opportunities.

B. Actor #1 is to begin the scene in the center of the stage with #2 and #3 positioned on his left and right respectively. Actor #1 will remain silent during the entire scene. He may look back and forth at the other characters.

C. Actors #2 and #3 may both talk and move. Each must strive to gain #1's attention and gain dominance over his competitor. The actors may not, however, push and shove one another or touch Actor #1.

D. Actor #1 should occasionally move to a different position on stage or position his body differently on stage thus forcing #2 and #3 to relocate their positions in an attempt to maintain dominance.

E. When he feels the scene has gone on long enough, Actor #1 may finally address either #2 or #3, whomever he feels has succeeded more in dominating the scene. And then the scene is over.

or

A fourth participant in the audience may call "CURTAIN" to end the scene.

F. All participants should discuss the scene and comment on how different individuals managed to achieve dominance at different times during the scene.

G. Repeat the process with actors switching roles and possibly changing the WHO, WHAT and WHERE.

3. Read the chapter on "Stage Technique" in INTRODUCTION TO ACTING by Stanley Kahan, p. 45-65. You may wish to do some of the activities recommended at the end of the chapter, but they are not required.

4. Read Chapter 8 and Chapter 9 in BASIC DRAMA PROJECTS by Fran Averett Tanner. You may wish to do some of the activities recommended at the end of each chapter, but they are not required. Please do <u>not</u> write in the book itself.

5. Ask a more experienced actor or Theatre Arts student to demonstrate the five body positions and explain the following terms:

UPSTAGE	SHARING A SCENE
DOWNSTAGE	GIVING A SCENE
STAGE RIGHT	TAKING A SCENE
CENTER	COUNTER-CROSS
STAGE LEFT	CROSSING ABOVE
CROSS	CROSSING BELOW

In addition ask him to explain such concepts as "opening up" to an audience, upstaging another actor, making a stage turn, and other practices which make standing, sitting, rising, exiting, fighting, and kissing more graceful on stage. Have your "instructor" sign the statement below:

I have explained the above listed terms to _____ (your name) and am satisfied that he(she) could now demonstrate the meaning of these terms to another student. I have also demonstrated the five body positions for an actor on stage.

signed:_____

6. Do the exercises described on pages 65 and 66 of INTRODUCTION TO ACTING by Stanley Kahan. When you feel confident about making graceful stage crosses and appropriate adjustments in body position, make an appointment with your instructor who will call on you to demonstrate several of these skills.

7. Create a model of a stage with the nine stage areas drawn onto the stage floor or ask your teacher for a felt board on which you may outline the same nine areas with strips of felt. Then, moving chess pieces as actors, use your model to do the exercises in Activity 6 above. Make an appointment with your instructor to illustrate these crosses and body positions on your model.

8. Ask your teacher for 8 slides of classical paintings (from H.W.Janson's History of Art), and analyze the pictures for stage dominance. Explain what is emphasized and what techniques the artist used for emphasis. Include in your explanation body position and "stage" areas; you also might want to discuss artistic aspects such as color, since this also is used in theatre. Your explanation may be written, taped, or given directly to your teacher.

9. Do the assignment on pages 54 and 55 of BASIC DRAMA PROJECTS by Fran Averett Tanner. When you feel your pantomime is good enough for others to watch, arrange an appropriate performance date and time (e.g. during a regular class period) and invite your teacher and friends to be an audience.

   To find out how successful your staging has been, ask your audience to complete the following questionnaire. Your teacher has additional copies for you to distribute. When you read the responses, pay particular attention to how precisely audience members answer questions #5 and #6. If many give precise examples for #6, your staging has probably been effectively.

   QUESTIONNAIRE ABOUT PANTOMIMED SCENE

   performed by

   _____

   _____

   1. Where did this scene take place? Inside or outside? Can you give specifics?

   2. What did the actors do to let you know where they are?

   3. What do you know about the characters? Who are they? Identify them by age, occupation, relationship, or some other significant fact.
      a.

      b.

   4. What is the situation occurring on stage? What problem does one or both of the characters face?

   5. Which character seemed to be more important in the scene? How did you know he is more important?

      ___ He was clearly the person with the central problem
      ___ His position on stage Character:_____
      ___ The way he gestured
      ___ The way the other character focused on him
      ___ All of the above

   6. Can you remember and describe a point in the scene which illustrates how one character was made more important than the others?

SELF-EVALUATION:

1. The self-evaluation for this lesson consists of a check list and a test. The check list helps you make sure you have completed the proper amount of activities; the test helps you determine how well you understand terms which describe stage areas, movement, and positions.

2. Check list:
   A. Of the first two activities, I did (you must check at least one):

      ___ Activity 1 ___ Activity 2

   B. Of the next three activities, I did (you must check at least one):

      ___ Activity 3 ___ Activity 4 ___ Activity 5

   C. Of the final four activities, I did (you must check at least one):

      ___ Activity 6 ___ Activity 7 ___ Activity 8 ___ Activity 9

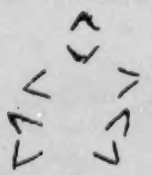
   D. My instructor witnessed or checked over my work after I completed Activity 6, 7, 8, or 9. (Ask your instructor to initial the space below.)

      Instructor's initials:_____

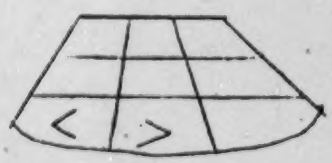
3. The following self-test is multiple choice. Circle the best choice given after each question. The choices ("a" through "j") are listed or diagramed at the top of the test. If you are not sure how to complete this test, ask your instructor for help. When you have completed it, grade yourself. If you score 80% or better, go on to Lesson 3. If you score lower, see Instruction 6 at the beginning of this lesson.

BODY POSITION SYMBOLIZED IN THE DIAGRAMS BELOW

a. full front
b. full back
c. profile (left and right)
d. one-quarter (left and right)
e. three-quarters (left and right)

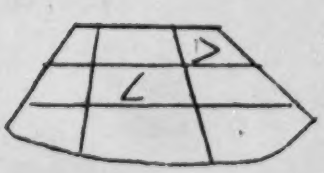


f.



AUDIENCE

g.



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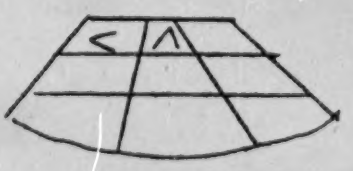
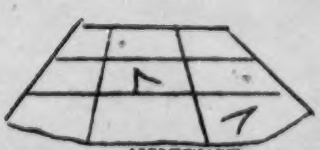


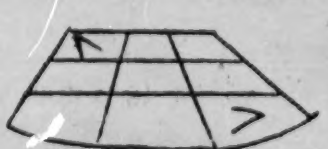
AUDIENCE

i.



AUDIENCE

j.



AUDIENCE

1) Which body position on stage is considered the strongest or most dominant? (circle one)

a. b. c. d. e.

2) Which two body positions are considered the weakest? (Circle one pair)

a & b c & d e & a e & b d & b

3) Two characters on stage are arguing, but in terms of dominance they are "sharing" the scene. Most likely, their body position is...(circle one)

a. b. c. d. e.

4) For less argumentive scenes the most common body position for shared scenes is...(circle one)

a. b. c. d. e.

5) Of the above diagrams, the one that illustrates a shared scene is... (circle one)

f. g. h. i. j.

6) Of the above diagrams, the one that has one character symbolized in the "down right" stage area is...(circle one)

f. g. h. i. j.

7) Of the above diagrams, the one that has a character symbolized in a dominant center stage position is...(circle one)

f. g. h. i.

8) Of the above diagrams, the one that has a character in a dominant upstage right position is...(circle one)

f. g. h. i. j.

9) The only diagram above that has a character "upstaging" another character who is center stage is...(circle one)

f. g. h. i.

10) The only diagram above that symbolizes a character in the upstage left position is...(circle one)

f. g. h. i. j.

Answers:

1) a 2) e & b 3) c 4) d 5) f 6) f 7) i or h 8) j 9) g 10) g

LESSON 3: WORKING WITH SCRIPTS ON STAGE

PURPOSE:

Acting is really more than simply learning lines, and interpreting dialogue. Relationships between characters are also dependent on where the actors stand in relation to each other and on how they move during a scene.

PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVES:

The actor will be able to act out a short script establishing dominance through body positions, movement, and blocking; vocal expression as well as character relationships will also be communicated in the short scene.

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. This lesson is written for three actors, but as in Lesson 2, it would be possible for two learners to occassionally recruit a third student as an observer or helper.
2. Complete all six activities in this lesson.
3. You will need a tape recorder for activities 1 and 2. One is available in the Drama Resource Area. Check it out from your instructor or a student aide.

ACTIVITIES:

1. Locate 2 other actors (male or female) who will work with you on this and subsequent activities. Check out a tape recorder from your instructor, and while one of you operates the recorder, the other two should read the scene titled "A Family Difference" which appears at the end of the lesson. Try to give emphasis in your reading so that the actor playing the role of PARENT seems to dominate the scene. Play back the tape, and if all three of you cannot agree that PARENT seems to be winning the argument, discuss how to improve the reading and re-record the scene.
2. Record "A Family Difference" a second time with the actor who operated the machine switching jobs with the actor who played PARENT. This time the actor who is playing the role of CHILD should try to dominate the scene. (It will help if you end the scene before PARENT reads his final line.) Play back the tape. Again, try to get all three actors to agree that this time CHILD seems to be winning the argument. If you do not agree, discuss how to improve the reading and re-record the scene.
3. Next, set up a "stage" as follows:

PARENT and CHILD sit in the chairs; the third actor should observe as audience. Read the scene a third time.

Repeat the scene with the same actors playing the same roles (including "observer"), but this time allow PARENT to stand behind his chair and occasionally pace over to CHILD's chair and back to his own. Have the "observer" complete the following sentences:

A. Of the two scenes, I thought the more interesting one was

_____.

B. One thing that made it more interesting was_____

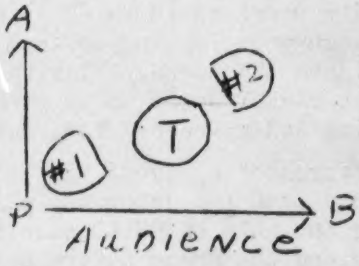
_____.

C. The character who seemed to have more "power" was _____.

This may have been because_____.

4. Switch roles as you did in Activity 2. This time set up the stage in the following way:

Have PARENT sit in chair #1 and CHILD sit in chair #2 and read the scene. Repeat the scene with the same actors playing the same roles, except this time allow PARENT to stand behind his chair and occasionally pace to Position A or Position B.



Have the observer complete the following sentences:

A. During the first scene the character who seemed to have a stronger position on stage was _____.

B. In the second scene the PARENT seemed to become stronger when he moved to position (circle one) A B Both A and B.

C. One way to give a character emphasis in a scene is to have him speak with firmness, loudness, or conviction. Another way to give a character emphasis in a scene (even when he is not speaking) is to

_____.

5. By this time you should be fairly familiar with the general content of the scene titled "A Family Difference," so for this activity try memorizing the script or put it aside and ad lib or improvise the dialogue. Again, since there are only two characters in the scene, one actor will always be an observer. Switch roles frequently as you experiment several times with the scene as described below.

   A. Try beginning the scene with the two actors standing quite close to each other in the middle of the stage. Each time a character completes a sentence he should take a step back away from the other actor. By the time the scene is completed both actors should be quite some distance from each other.

   B. Now reverse the process. Have the two actors start some distance away and take a step toward the other character just before uttering a sentence.

   C. Try other physical arrangements: one character facing the audience and keeping his back to the other character. One standing and one sitting; then about half way through the sitting person stands and the other one sits. Have the CHILD sit on the floor part of the time.

   The purpose of these experiments is to let you experience some "gut" feelings about the strengths and weaknesses of certain positions and movements on stage. Each observer should write in the space below some of the feelings he had about stage positions which seemed to give characters strength or emphasis.

   Observer 1: _____

   _____

   _____

   Observer 2: _____

   _____

   _____

   Observer 3: _____

   _____

   _____

6. Pick up the script of "A Family Difference" once more. (You'll be happy to know this is your final exercise with that script.) This time the actor who is the observer should become a director and be responsible for making final choices concerning the movement that accompanies this final reading of the script. All three actors may make suggestions about the movement, but the observer-director should have the right to make final decisions. This making of decisions concerning movement is called BLOCKING: you will hear the term often in relation to acting and directing.

Try to arrange your final BLOCKING of the scene so that the PARENT seems to be in charge of the situation until the CHILD's next-to-last line. With that line ("Maybe I should judge you by...") have the actors move to different positions on stage so that now the CHILD seems to have the upper hand. Be prepared to act out this final version of the scene when you have your post evaluation with your instructor.

POST-EVALUATION:

1. The post-evaluation for this package will consist of a meeting with your instructor at which time you will present him with this packet with all the appropriate blanks filled in.

2. You should also have with you any tapes, models, or audience questionnaires that you made or collected while completing the lessons.

3. Be prepared to perform the scene "A Family Difference" as described in Activity 6 of Lesson 3. You may also be called upon to perform other scenes you prepared while completing activities in Lesson 1 and Lesson 2.

4. Please fill out and return the Package Evaluation following this page.

EVALUATION OF PACKAGE TITLED STAGE MOVEMENT

Instructions:

Please answer the following questions and then place this sheet in the box provided by your instructor. Your opinion will be appreciated, so do not ask a friend for help. It is not required that you sign this evaluation.

1. How many school days did you anticipate it would take to complete this package? _____ school days

2. How many did it actually take? _____ school days
If the difference between your two answers is greater than 3 days, what do you feel caused you to take more (or less) time?

3. How well did you enjoy working with Shadow Scene B ("Hello. I didn't expect to see you here.")?

___ a lot! ___ some ___ not much ___ not at all

4. How useful did you find the information in Lesson 2 about stage areas and body positions?

___ very useful ___ fairly useful ___ not very useful

___ I knew most of it already.

5. What was the most difficult activity to complete?

The most useless?

6. What problems, if any, did you encounter while working on this package.

7. What changes, if any, would you recommend in the wording or requirements of these lessons?

8. How would you rate this package? (Circle one)

No Good	Some Good	OK	Good	Very Good

(Optional) Signed: _____

A FAMILY DIFFERENCE

The following dialogue takes place between a teenager and his (or her) parent. It is written so that both characters may be of either sex. Assume that the dialogue takes place in the family living room.

CHILD: You know, I really can't stand the way you treat Don when he comes over here. I just think it's disgusting and embarrassing.

PARENT: I think he's disgusting. I can't stand the looks of that boy. He never washes. He dresses in rags.

CHILD: But he's my friend.

PARENT: That's what bothers me. If that's what you find attractive, I'm afraid you're going to go around that way yourself. If you value that kind of sloppiness, then what has happened to all the things that your mother (father) and I have done to bring you up to be neat and . . .

CHILD: Why should I respect what you respect?

PARENT: Because it's what every decent human being respects. That's why.

CHILD: I don't know, I find Don pretty decent. He's got other things in his head besides cleanliness. He's a thinker; he writes poetry; he's sensitive to other people. You judge all of my friends just by the way they look.

PARENT: Well, there's a lot that people say by the way they look. They're advertising themselves by the way they look.

CHILD: Oh? I didn't know I was a bulletin board.

PARENT: I hope you're not! But I'm a little worried you'll become one if you start hanging around with a person like Don.

CHILD: Maybe I should judge you by the friends you hang around with: What's-her-name. Matilda. With the dyed red hair.

PARENT: At least my friends are clean.

CHILD: Clean, but phony! I guess if I'm going to become dirty like Don then you're going to become phony like Matilda. Huh? (pause) Answer that one . . . (sarcastically), Pop (or Mumsy).

PARENT: I'm not phony! But I can see you've already learned to be sassy from your friend, Don!